

Ageways

Practical issues in ageing and development

Issue 84 / July 2016



Networks

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HelpAge

global network

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Future issues

As HelpAge International develops its role as a secretariat, we are reviewing the way we communicate with network members, including the publication of *Ageways*.

Issue 85 will be published later in 2016, sharing experience from Bangladesh of using traditional cultural activities to promote the rights of older people.

Front cover

Effie, 83, is an active member of a service centre supported by Muthande Society for the Aged, one of about thirty organisations in the South African Age Network.

Photo: Eva-Lotta Jansson/HelpAge International

Comment

Strength in numbers

Welcome to *Ageways* 84. For too long, older people have been struggling to make their voices heard by policy makers, and remain excluded from many economic and social development policies. But this is changing as more older people are joining forces and forming networks to raise their voices.

This issue of *Ageways* shines the spotlight on Southern Africa, where HelpAge International and national age networks are sharing knowledge and collaborating on research, programmes and advocacy on ageing issues – with some impressive results. This approach chimes with HelpAge International's new strategy to support a dynamic global network standing up for the rights of older people.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue and we hope you take encouragement from the experiences described here.

Lowna Gie, Lwazikazi Mtana and Celia Till *Editors*



Letters

Beekeeping pays off

I am a regular reader of *Ageways*. I want to share the work a 75-year-old beekeeper, Mr Tesfaye. He learnt about traditional beekeeping on a hive in a tree in a church compound where he is serving. Now he has three German hives, three Kenyan hives, two mud hives and two tree hives in his backyard in a shed. Bees collect nectar from flowers from different trees and maize plants near his residence.

Mr Tesfaye produces 3-8 kilograms of honey per hive each harvesting season. He harvests twice or thrice per year depending how good a year it is. He has used micro-credit and paid off more than half the money borrowed. He is looking for additional land and equipment to do more apiculture. I think his story might inspire other retirees.

Habtamu Lemma, Trainer in Livestock Sciences, Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopia (by email).

Cost of disability

I am a person who is physically challenged living in a rural area of Zambia. I do not know the cause of my disability. According to my grandmother, I stepped on charms as I was learning to crawl. Belief in witchcraft was deep-rooted in our society then. On the other hand, medical experts claim that I had polio.

I have felt the impact of my disability at every stage of my life. Disability is costly even when someone is in formal employment. For example, there is a community meeting 1.5km from where I live. It is a development meeting and I should be there. I have no choice but to hire transport, whereas someone who is able-bodied can walk.

With the emphasis on community participation, people with disabilities will

continue to remain behind in development because of mobility challenges. We need assistive devices such as crutches, wheelchairs and even motor vehicles to be integrated into society and contribute to development. The problem is that humanitarian agencies, donors and international bodies neglect or pay lip service to the needs of people living with disabilities. May I also know to what extent the humanitarian agencies involve people living with disability in disaster management.

Here is a person who is already faced with disability reaching the age of 60. If we cannot separate the effects of disability and old age, then those that are old and campaigning for their rights need to be inclusive and should champion the rights of people living with disabilities. Old age has double impact on a person living with a disability. How would one be trained in HOPE from the disability point of view?

Bosswell Mbozi, Director, Christian Resource Centre, c/o Chikantata Mission Hospital, Private Bag S2, Chikantata, Zambia.

Diana Hiscock, ADCAP Disability Adviser, HelpAge International, replies:

HOPE – Helping Older People in Emergencies – is a HelpAge International training programme that seeks to help humanitarian practitioners understand

older people's particular needs in emergencies. HOPE training has been delivered to more than 500 humanitarian practitioners and policy makers from over 19 countries since 2012. You can find out more at www.helpage.org/resources/training/helping-older-people-in-emergencies-hope

Building on HOPE, we have developed ADCAP – Age and Disability Capacity Training – to strengthen disability-inclusive humanitarian responses. This includes a publication, *Minimum Standards for Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action*, available at www.helpage.org/download/56421daeb4eff

It also includes e-learning modules for humanitarian workers on the Disaster.org website at www.disasterready.org/courses

These include a module, *Understanding older people and their needs in a humanitarian context*. To date, over 490 people have taken the courses and 200 are in progress.

There is also a series of webinars on *Understanding the minimum standards on age and disability inclusion*, *Using the Washington Group data*, and *Protection in emergency*, with over 180 people participating in the live events with more topics to follow over the next six months. They can be found at <http://reliefweb.int/videos/single/disasterready1/rTUe8MSWwr8>

I hope this goes some way to reassuring you that ageing and disability issues are becoming more recognised in the humanitarian system.

News

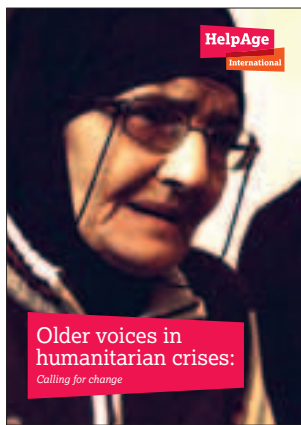
Social pension in Zanzibar

A universal government-funded pension scheme was launched in Zanzibar in April 2016, the first of its kind in east Africa. Anyone over the age of 70 is entitled to a monthly non-contributory pension of 20,000 Tanzanian shillings (US\$9).

Ageing policy in Zambia

The Government of Zambia approved a policy to enhance realisation of the rights of older people in February 2016. Both the Senior Citizens Association of Zambia and HelpAge International are acknowledged in the policy as participating in its development.

New publications



Sauti ya Wazee (Voice of Older People)

The March 2016 issue of this newsletter from Tanzania has stories on the 25th anniversary of the UN International Day of Older Persons, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, older women, Africa Human Rights Day and more.

www.helpage.org/download/5707ba771d816

Minimum standards for age and disability inclusion in humanitarian response

This publication provides guidelines on the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian programmes to ensure that older people and people with disabilities and not excluded.

www.helpage.org/download/56421daeb4eff

Older voices in humanitarian crises: calling for change

This report documents the experiences of older people fleeing from conflict in South Sudan, Syria and Ukraine.

www.helpage.org/download/5730c4e01a6c7

Rapid assessment method for older people (RAM-OP)

This training manual gives step-by-step guidance on how to estimate the needs of older people in humanitarian and developmental contexts.

www.helpage.org/download/566ec3ae11e3c

AgeNews Asia/Pacific

Issue 17 of this regional newsletter reports on the adoption of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Ageing, the establishment of a new consortium for research on ageing and other events.

www.helpage.org/download/567823ab46fc1



Ending gender inequality in older age: guidance for EU development policy

This briefing explains the nature of gender inequality in older age and makes recommendations for European Union development policy.

www.helpage.org/download/566855f3d4fa

End the neglect: a study of humanitarian financing for older people

This study illustrates the failure of the current system to allocate adequate resourcing to address older people's needs.

www.helpage.org/download/5739e122c3300

Forget me not: improving dementia care in Andean countries

This project summary describes how dementia care has been improved in Bolivia, Colombia and Peru.

www.helpage.org/download/5716378cbc1a1



You can download more publications

from www.helpage.org/resources/publications

All back issues of *Ageways* can be downloaded from www.helpage.org/ageways

Creating a stronger platform

Necodimus Chipfupa describes how networking in Southern Africa is amplifying the voices of older people.

For too long, older people in Southern Africa have been under-represented in civil society. They remain largely invisible to policy makers and their issues (see box) go unresolved. But this is starting to change. By forming organisations, and linking these with other civil society organisations, older people have a stronger platform to make their voices heard at local, national, regional and global levels.

Networks supporting older people amplify their voices, raise awareness of their issues and collaborate with other stakeholders to solve them. Networks are one way in which older people will not be left behind.

Country age networks

So far, in Southern Africa, HelpAge International is involved in the development of six country age networks: Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. HelpAge is collaborating with them to develop a regional network strategy to guide their direction.


These six country age networks have a diverse history and set-up, including formal and informal structures, and range in size from fewer than ten member organisations in Lesotho to nearly thirty in Malawi.

However, they all share a purpose to:

- advocate for older people's rights and wellbeing with governments and other major bodies
- provide a platform for older men and women to amplify their voice through campaigning
- generate and share information on older people and increase support for ageing issues
- collaborate on programme activities to improve the quality and increase resources
- develop the network by strengthening members' skills and expanding the membership.

In terms of policy development, most governments in Southern Africa prefer to relate to networks rather than individual organisations. Through the networks, the individual organisations can feed into national dialogue like tributaries into a river.

The networks include older people's organisations as well as organisations not focusing specifically on ageing. Older citizens monitoring and advocacy by older people, supported by older people's organisations, are the essential channels for



Older men in Cahora Bassa District, Mozambique learn about their rights to basic services from the Provincial Association of Older People, part of a national network, Forum da Terceira Idade.

older people to identify and communicate issues of concern and be truly represented by these networks. There are now around 250 older citizen's monitoring groups in the region (see page 10).

Influencing policy

The country age networks in Southern Africa already have an impressive policy-influencing track record. Advocacy by the country age network in Zambia, led by the Senior Citizens' Association of Zambia (SCAZ), contributed to the launch of a national policy on ageing in February 2016. Following the Age Demands Action campaign on rights, the government committed to deploying a permanent representative to sit at the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing to contribute to discussions about a UN convention on the rights of older people.

The network in Mozambique, Forum da Terceira Idade (FTI), conducted a successful advocacy campaign leading to the approval of the law on the protection and promotion of older people's rights in 2014. With HelpAge International's support, FTI mobilised older people's associations to take part in the Age Demands Action campaign and engage with the Ministry of Social Action and members of parliament.

Poverty, poor health and insecurity

For many of the 16 million people aged 60 years and over in Southern Africa,¹ older age means lower living standards due to deteriorating health and fewer opportunities to make a living. Several countries in the region provide some level of social protection but most lack coherent policies.

Health-related problems for older people include inaccessible healthcare services, chronic food insecurity, and both communicable and non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. High prevalence of HIV affects older people not only as relatives and carers but also increasingly as people living with HIV.

Natural disasters are also a threat. Heavy rains combined with cyclones in coastal areas often lead to extensive flooding, while periods of drought, such as currently caused by El Niño, create growing pockets of chronic food insecurity. Civil unrest and wars also take their toll. Older people have specific needs for humanitarian assistance but these are widely overlooked in disaster risk management and humanitarian response.



Ellie Coleman/HelpAge International

A winning approach

There are many advantages to forming country age networks. They can:

- enable organisations to collaborate to raise awareness about older people's rights
- provide a critical mass and stronger voice to advocate for policy change
- help member organisations build expertise by exchanging information and experiences at meetings and workshops
- link people from different disciplines
- give member organisations and individuals a wider perspective on ageing and development issues through contact with other organisations
- facilitate knowledge sharing, skills transfer and problem solving
- support peer learning and exchange visits between member organisations and/or groups of older men and women
- enable member organisations to carry out joint activities
- allow member organisations to pool resources to achieve results that they could not have achieved if they were working alone
- reduce duplication of work because member organisations are informed of each other's plans.

Furthermore, the government approved the National Strategy for Social Security 2016-2024 and the Ministry of Health has committed to training health professionals in geriatrics and gerontology.

The Malawi Network of Elderly Persons Organisations (Manepo) is representing older people in the government's review of its National Social Support Programme. Manepo, together with HelpAge and the Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Services, has carried out a feasibility study on the application of a universal pension, which will feed into the review.

An achievement of the South Africa Age Network (SAAN) is the formation of an NGO coalition in one province. Through the combined strength of its members, the coalition persuaded the government against diverting a substantial part of the budget for older people to another programme.

Networking regionally

Together, the six country age networks in Southern Africa have formed the Southern African Regional Age Network (SARAN) to advocate for the rights of older people at regional and international level.

Through its members, SARAN aims to bring together civil society, research institutions, universities, the private sector, governments and donors to advocate with bodies such as the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the African Union, Pan African Parliament and, internationally, the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing.

Since SARAN was established three years ago, it has gained recognition among the country age networks for promoting shared learning and common actions. SARAN has been instrumental in improving the quality of evidence on social protection to support advocacy nationally and regionally, through research requested by national governments, publication of position papers, contributing to social protection policy development processes, and including ageing in the annual SADC Civil Society Forum. Following lobbying by SARAN, five governments issued statements or attended sessions of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing to back the call for a UN convention on the rights of older people.

SARAN also contributed to ensuring that older people and ageing were included in the Sustainable Development Goals by participating in the Action/2015 campaign. SARAN is formalising knowledge sharing

among the country age networks and other interested parties by developing a knowledge hub to make research reports and other resources available online. At country level, SARAN is ensuring country age network members develop into thematic groups through which their expertise can be fully utilised, including through programme work and advocacy.

HelpAge International has provided financial and technical support to the country age networks in Southern Africa and provides a secretariat function to the regional network. In addition, HelpAge International provides information and campaign materials, especially for Age Demands Action, and facilitates the sharing of knowledge among country age networks.

The emphasis on networking in Southern Africa reflects HelpAge's new strategy to strengthen knowledge sharing and collaboration across the whole HelpAge global network (see page 16).

Necodimus Chipfupa is Regional Director, HelpAge International Southern Africa.
Email: nchipfupa@helpagesouthafrica.org

1. UNDESA Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision*, DVD Edition, 2015 (for the 14 countries in the Southern African Development Community)

Elements of a successful network

Lowna Gie looks at elements of a successful age network and how to overcome some common problems.

The establishment of an age network is not a goal in itself. An age network can have a very good structure but not improve the wellbeing of the older men and women it aims to serve. On the other hand, organisations can achieve a great deal for older people through active networking and collaborating on specific activities, without creating a formal network. However, a well managed network makes it easier for like-minded organisations to work together and achieve more.

It is suggested that organisations interested in setting up an age network discuss and agree on a clear purpose. It is important that all member organisations have a shared understanding of what they want to achieve and the direction they will follow. They will also need to consider criteria for membership and practical issues, such as frequency and location of meetings, and what resources will be required.

One or more individuals (network coordinators) will need to be responsible for coordinating the network. Usually, a member organisation takes on the role of secretariat and allocates staff. It is recommended that secretariat functions are located in a strong member organisation that is able to provide support and some resources. Ideally, the coordinating role is rotated among member organisations.

A good way for a new network to start is by developing a terms of reference describing its purpose and structure and an operational framework establishing its values and ways of working. This can be developed into a constitution.

Making it work

Developing an effective network takes time, effort and commitment. There is no standard formula for a successful age network but the following elements may be considered:

Diverse members and strategic partners

It is advisable to recruit members and form strategic partnerships not just with

organisations focusing on older men and women, but also with those that have a broader interest in issues affecting older people.

For example, the National Age Network of Zimbabwe (NANZ) aims to promote intergenerational solidarity by raising awareness of ageing with young people. NANZ members include Chiedza Child Care Centre, as well as other non-age focused organisations including the Zimbabwean Farmers Union, Barefoot Education for Afrika Trust, Elizabeth Chanakira Cancer Trust and Island Hospice Healthcare.

Trust between member organisations

It is important for members to trust and respect each other, so that the network is secure and cohesive. The network coordinator and/or secretariat can promote trust by encouraging members to communicate regularly with each other (for example through email, Skype, in-person meetings, WhatsApp or phone calls), develop shared values, set challenging but achievable goals, and celebrate successes.

Active participation of members

The success of the age network depends on the active participation and commitment of all its member organisations. All members should be involved in developing the main activities and assigning responsibilities.

Concrete activities that are interesting to member organisations

The activities of the age network should be interesting and beneficial to member organisations, otherwise they will become a burden. For example, members of Forum de Terceira Idade (FTI) in Mozambique and the age network in Zambia have focused on influencing national laws and policies on older people. Their advocacy contributed to the development of the Law on the Protection and Promotion of Older People's rights in Mozambique in 2014 and the launch of the National Ageing Policy in Zambia in 2016.

Good governance and management systems

A successful network, whether with a formal or informal membership, has clear guiding principles, and agreed governance systems (covering the purpose of the network; the roles and responsibilities of the board, secretariat and members; membership criteria; grievance mechanisms; and operational policies and procedures).

For example, the Malawi Network of Elderly Persons Organisations (Manepo) has a constitution, while the Lesotho Age Network, FTI in Mozambique, the country age network in Zambia and NANZ in Zimbabwe all have terms of reference.

Strong communication and decision-making processes

Information should flow freely between members to enable them to be involved in decision-making, take on new initiatives and feel a sense of ownership. It is recommended that networks form clusters or forums of a few member organisations with expertise in specific areas, such as the Communications Forum within the Southern African Regional Age Network (SARAN) (see box).

Communications Forum

The Communications Forum of SARAN is made up of representatives from country networks who meet (via Skype) once a month with the secretariat to support each other on advocacy and communication.

In September 2015, the forum members were briefed on how to use HelpAge International's Global AgeWatch Index as an advocacy tool and how to pitch it to the media.

Due to this training, over 1,000 older men and women participated in the launch of the Index in Zambia and Mozambique, and media houses in Mozambique and South Africa reported on the Index.



Senior citizens marching in Durban, South Africa as part of the Age Demands Action campaign.

Sufficient resources and strong financial systems Age networks require at least some resources to function. It is important to develop a resource-mobilisation strategy linked to the network's long-term strategy. Funding sources can include institutional donors, foundations, government, the private sector and membership fees. If possible, all member organisations should contribute resources (funding, in-kind donations and/or time), based on their means. For example, Manepo has different payment structures for international and national member organisations.

A strong financial system that includes tracking funding and returns to improve value for money is important.

Regular monitoring and evaluation The secretariat and/or a specific member organisation should take responsibility for monitoring and evaluating activities.

Emphasis on learning and knowledge sharing Being part of a network means that member organisations can learn from each other. A good way to do this is by setting up a knowledge hub such as AgeAfrica.net, a website containing publications and other resources on ageing issues being developed by the SARAN.

Flexibility to respond to changing needs Age networks need to strive to be dynamic, and adapt to changing socio-economic and political contexts as well as urgent needs, for example, created by natural disasters.

Lowna Gie is Network and Partnerships Development Manager, HelpAge International Southern Africa Regional Office. Email: lowna.gie@helpagesouthafrica.org

Common problems and how to overcome them

Problem	Solution
The network is growing without a clear sense of direction	Develop, implement and monitor a clear strategy and accompanying costed annual plans to keep the focus. Regularly review the purpose of the network and evaluate its benefits for the members and older people. Consider the fact that the network may need a period of sharing information to capture members' enthusiasm.
Becomes inward focused and actually achieves very little, causing the membership to fall	Ensure that older people's associations are integral in member organisations so that the real needs of older people are heard and understood, and activities are developed accordingly. Member organisations should establish systems to keep in regular contact with older people's associations.
Becomes dominated by a few loud individuals or larger member organisations	Emphasise the importance of equality and full participation from the beginning. Spend sufficient time to establish these principles and develop processes to ensure that benefits resulting from the network are equally shared.
Competition between member organisations for resources or for recognition	Form a specific cluster (small group of members) responsible for fundraising. Make sure network decisions (especially regarding finances) are transparent and democratic. Establish procedures for sharing funding, training and other benefits among members. Decisions which may benefit one member more than another should be justified and minuted. Ensure that there is a dispute or grievance policy in place to enable conflicts to be discussed fairly.
Becomes too reliant on an employed coordinator, causing decision-making to become centralised and undemocratic	The coordinator must bring members together for joint activities and utilise all of their expertise. Members should be encouraged to communicate among themselves, although issues affecting all members should be communicated through the coordinator. A clear succession plan for the coordinator must be put in place and designated members mentored for this role.
Lack of transparency, accountability and poor governance	Develop, implement, monitor and update guiding documents (including a constitution, terms of reference, strategy, policies and procedures).
No or poor communication between member organisations	Implement effective and regular communications using a variety of methods such as in-person meetings, WhatsApp, telephone calls, emails, trainings, workshops and Skype.
Lack of funding, in particular for administrative functions	Develop, implement, monitor and update a resource mobilisation strategy including a clear mapping of the funds available and identifying a variety of funders.
Poor infrastructure, especially internet and electricity, affecting communication	Explore other means of communication if one form is problematic. For example, if Skype is not reliable consider other free internet platforms (such as WebEx) or other means (such as phone calls, SMS or WhatsApp). Set up a plan B in case you cannot communicate the way you intended. Above all, be patient and keep trying.

How networking adds value

Leaders of country age networks and older people's organisations describe how networking advances the issues of older people.



“People are buying into the concept of networking”

Jacob Skhosana, National Coordinator, South African Older Persons Forum and Coordinator, South Africa Age Network

The South African Older Persons Forum (SAOPF) was set up in 2009 by the Department of Social Development in conjunction with the South African Human Rights Commission. We now have around 400,000 members in local organisations across all the nine provinces.

People realised that the NGO sector was fragmented. NGOs saw each other as rivals. HelpAge International called a meeting of pro-older people organisations. We told them about the benefits of engaging with policy makers with one voice and invited organisations to join the South African Age Network (SAAN). It was clear that one organisation had to take the lead and that SAOPF was best placed to do this.

SAAN was formed in 2013. We have about thirty members including civil society organisations and government departments working on a range of issues including older people, eye care, dementia, elder abuse and food security as well as intergenerational issues.

One of our main achievements was to influence the formation of an NGO coalition in Eastern Cape. About 17 organisations working on children, disability issues, health, HIV, food security, old age homes and service centres are collaborating with each other.

Last year, the Department of Social Development in Eastern Cape was going to divert 40 per cent of the budget for older people to another programme. The coalition took it up at a meeting with the Department secured by SAOPF and the decision was reversed. It was a big issue in the media.

We have formed a thematic cluster, focusing on health, and are in the process of establishing a justice cluster. These provide a platform for organisations working on these issues to come together regularly to share knowledge and experience and carry out joint advocacy.

SAAN has been faced with challenges with raising resources and with frequent changes to the board. However, the current board, including retired lawyers and academics, is strong and on the ball, and people are starting to buy into the concept of SAAN.



“It's a wonderful platform for knowledge sharing”

Andrew Kavala, Coordinator, Malawi Network of Elderly Persons Organizations (Manepo)

The Malawi Network of Elderly Persons Organisations (Manepo) was formed in 2013 to coordinate interventions meant to bring a better life for older men and women in Malawi. Manepo does not implement any programmes directly, but coordinates programmes through its members. However, Manepo handles all lobbying and advocacy and leads on capacity building.

Most of the 27 members focus on older people but for some, ageing issues are

just a component of some of their programmes. Senior citizens associations also form part of the membership.

We are now finalising an MoU with Red Cross Malawi to ensure that the country's disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness packages are age inclusive.

Manepo has established itself as a think-tank on ageing issues in Malawi. We successfully led the process of developing a National Policy for Older Persons which is now with cabinet for approval. Manepo sits on the national development planning committee responsible for coordination and supervision of different national social services. We have conducted a feasibility study for a universal pension in Malawi which will inform the development of a successor strategy to the government's National Social Support Programme to ensure it is age inclusive.

In November 2015, we organised a media training for journalists in Malawi. This has led to better coverage of older people's issues. Previously, the media was only interested in older people when they turned 100. Reports on older people's issues are now more analytical and encourage debate.

One of the problems we face as a network is the need for more funds. We are getting members with resource mobilisation experience to lead the process. Sometimes it is not easy to participate in regional meetings due to internet connection hiccups. Overall, however, the network is a wonderful platform for knowledge sharing.



“We have made older people's issues a topic of national debate”

Marck Chikanza, Director for Centre for Community Development Solutions Trust (CCDST), Harare, Zimbabwe and Coordinator, National Age Network of Zimbabwe

The National Age Network of Zimbabwe (NANZ) sprang from a study in 2012, funded by HelpAge International, showing

that 40 per cent of successful farmers in Zimbabwe were over 60. We found that lending policies discriminate against older people. The Zimbabwe Land Reform Programme only targets people aged 18-55 and banks apply a risk matrix for loans that automatically excludes older people.

We realised that to advance issues of ageing, we needed to bring different organisations together. NANZ was set up in 2012 with the Centre for Community Development Solutions Trust (CCDST) as interim coordinator. We now have 12 members including the Non-Communicable Diseases Unit of the Ministry of Health and Child Care, the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Services Department, the Farmers' Union, and organisations focusing on older people, hospice care, cancer services, women, children, and human and community development.

We involve older people through their organisations and older citizens monitoring activities. One of the most prominent members of NANZ is the Zimbabwe Older Persons Organization and another is a care home for older people.

We have influenced three municipalities to improve food assistance in times of drought. In Zvishavane district, for example, older people are now separately targeted for food and input aid distribution.

We are also working on raising awareness on the health and rights access issues of older people through radio programmes and print media. These have led to a pledge from one private healthcare service provider to conduct cataract removals at half the rate of private hospitals.

Through NANZ, we have made older people's issues a topic of national debate. We have generated a great deal of media coverage, for example, through reports on elder abuse and phone-in programmes – one on ageing and bereavement attracted many calls not just from older people but predominantly from young people.

One of the challenges of a national network is getting consistent commitment from members, especially where there is no funding. Another is competition for project funding. However, there is strength in approaching funding as a network and increasingly donors want to fund consortiums.



“Being part of a network strengthens our advocacy”

Jonathan Mandaza, Chairperson, Zimbabwe Older Persons Organization

Zimbabwe Older Persons Organization (ZOPO) was founded in 2004. It was originally known as the Harare Senior Citizens Association and changed its name in 2012.

Membership has grown quickly since 2014 through our participation in the Better Health project [coordinated by Age International to improve older people's access to health and care services]. Now we have a database of 34,000 older men and women. We have established an older people's board, which is the vehicle for communicating with members.

Health is one of the major issues affecting our members. We are in the process of identifying the most common problems. These include hypertension, arthritis, backache, eye problems and diabetes. Until a few years ago, the government was providing free medicine to older people, but this is no longer the case. The government now provides free consultations, but the doctor writes a prescription for medicine. Those that cannot afford to pay unfortunately go back home, without receiving any treatment. The social support that older people receive from the government is erratic and not stable.

ZOPO mainly provides advice to members and we also provide support through advocacy. For example, we successfully approached the authorities in the city of Harare and Zvishavane district to obtain discounts for older people on their rents. We are now approaching the government to drive this at national level. We are also pushing for universal pensions.

We involve older people in ZOPO's work through older citizens monitoring as part of the Better Health project. We also get members involved in the Age Demands Action campaign by marching and speaking on issues affecting them.

One of the main benefits of being in the national network is being involved in the Better Health project. NANZ provides a learning platform for ZOPO which is strengthening our advocacy and our know-how.



“We are gaining information from each other”

Thembekile Hlubi, founder member and board member of Muthande Society for the Aged

Muthande Society for the Aged was initiated in the 1970s by a group of women working as community health nurses, social workers, community health educators and community leaders in Durban communities. They were exposed to a lot of suffering of older people from neglect, hunger and ill-health. This was during the darkest days of the apartheid regime.

These women realised the need for a community-based organisation that would render services to older people in their homes and communities. Muthande Society for the Aged was inaugurated in 1982. The society has developed greatly since then, providing social services, home-based care, literacy education and other activities including intergenerational story-telling and sports and recreation to promote a healthy lifestyle and active ageing through its six service centres. Older people are empowered with information on their rights and entitlements.

Muthande is a member of the South Africa Age Network health cluster which means we are connected with other organisations working on health and care. The cluster has come at a good time because of changes in the way that geriatric care is organised. Specialised training for doctors and nurses is no longer there. Through the health cluster, different organisations are gaining information from each other. For example, we are able to tackle the issue of dementia. Otherwise people simply see dementia as a sign of old age.

How older citizens monitoring works

Sydney Machafa describes how older people are identifying common problems and gathering evidence to present to decision makers.

Older citizens monitoring is about raising the voice of older people, based on evidence gathering. Older people monitor their access to services they are entitled to and present their findings to service providers. Their evidence is also used by civil society organisations and networks to influence policy.

Older citizens monitoring is a way in which some of the most disadvantaged people in society can hold their governments to account on the fulfilment of their human rights. For many older people, it has provided a platform to communicate directly with decision-makers, often for the first time in their lives.

Getting started

Older people's associations are supported by a community-based organisation or NGO that introduces the concept of older citizens monitoring, provides training and information, and facilitates meetings.

Older people's associations select members to become monitors who will collect information from older people in the area. The monitors work as volunteers and are motivated by learning from the process and gaining respect from their peers. They are accountable to their local community and can be de-selected if they are not collecting enough information.

The monitors ideally include a balance of men and women, though in practice the ratio varies. In some countries, women tend to be more prominent and in others, men are. With some issues, such as abuse, people prefer to talk to someone of their own sex, though on many issues they have no preference.

The older people's associations hold meetings to identify problems, discuss priorities and agree which services to monitor. They learn about laws and policies setting out their rights and entitlements. They also identify individuals and organisations that they want to influence or can help them do this.

Issues that commonly come up include difficulties claiming social pensions and childcare grants, and poor healthcare services. In one South Africa province, older people highlighted robbery at pension payment points and unexplained deductions from their payments. In another, they identified long waits at clinics and poorly labelled medication.

Collecting the data

The monitors then agree what to ask older people. They develop a questionnaire that will enable them to collect clear, reliable data. In countries with low literacy, the questionnaire can be quite simple, consisting of questions with "yes" or "no" answers. Where older people are more educated, they might be asked to rate their satisfaction with a service on a scale from 1-10.

Then the monitors draw up a plan of who to obtain the evidence from (for example, 1,000 men and women in the community aged 60 and over), how they will do this (using the questionnaire) and how often (quarterly). Over time, the answers they obtain will automatically become indicators, showing what effect the older citizens monitoring is having.

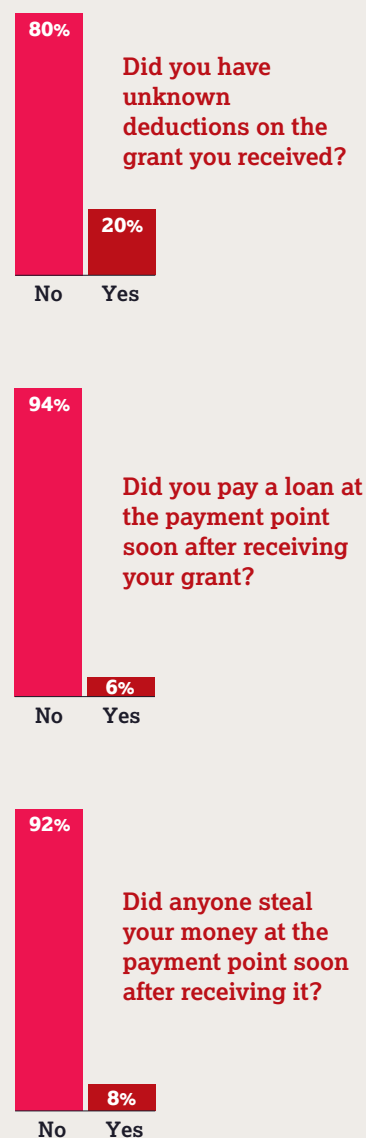
The next stage is data collection. In southern Africa, the monitors use a printed questionnaire and write the answers on it. However, some monitoring groups in the region say they could use mobile phones, since they already use them for transferring money, and a questionnaire format for mobile phones is being developed.

Data from the questionnaires is entered into an Excel spreadsheet by the supporting organisation. Older people use the data to challenge service providers. The data is also used more widely by NGOs and country age networks to influence policy at national, regional and global levels.

Sydney Machafa is Regional Monitoring, Learning and Evaluation Officer, HelpAge International, Southern Africa. Email: sydney.machafa@helpage.org

Presenting the data

Older volunteers in Limpopo, South Africa, interviewed 1,701 people receiving the government social pension to collect the following data:





“Older people are not going to keep quiet”

Roselyn Wosa, older citizens monitoring trainer and deputy head of Muthande Society for the Aged

Older people who come to Muthande’s day centres are selected by their peers to become older citizen monitors.

Last December, I ran training for 32 men and women from the six centres supported by Muthande in KwaZulu Natal. We looked at policies such as the Older Persons Act and National Insurance Policy and older people’s rights. We launched the project with a few service providers who have an interest in ageing issues and the community police forum so they knew that older people would be coming to them.

The monitors are collecting data on access to services. In one area they’re talking to older people at the local clinic. They’re finding that many are not getting their medication because it isn’t available or their files are missing. Some are being given only two packets and told to buy the rest. Others find that their medicine isn’t labelled correctly so they don’t know the dosage. Muthande’s home visitors collect information from older people who are bedridden.

Through the ongoing network and advocacy work Muthande is doing for

older persons, Muthande has managed to arrange with the sister-in-charge at the clinic to visit the centre to discuss ways of improving older people’s services in the local clinics. The monitors will present her with the number of people affected – about fifty – and plan a way forward.

Through older citizens monitoring, older people’s issues are becoming better known. They are no longer shy, they phone the Muthande office and tell us what’s happening. It makes me feel good to know that older people are not going to keep quiet.

“We need to know our rights”

Maxwell Khosa, older citizens monitor at a centre supported by Muthande Society for the Aged



I was selected for older citizens monitoring because I’m a people person.

I like to do what I can to help. I encourage senior citizens to spend time at the centre instead of sitting at home. When they come here they not only have a chance to dance and sing but they can also share problems and learn new skills.

Through older citizens monitoring I’ve learnt even more than before how to deal

with people, such as ward councillors. We have opted to monitor services for older people at the clinic, looking at whether their medication is labelled to say how they should take it, and whether they have to wait a long time.

We have had a meeting with the sister-in-charge. She has helped to make sure the dosages are written on the medication and older people don’t have to stand in

a queue, they can go straight to the doctor’s rooms.

I feel very good. When you’re over 60 it doesn’t mean your life has ended. There are still many things you can do. In South Africa we have rights. We need to know our rights. There’s nothing for us without us.

Making the voices of older people heard

Lwazikazi Mtana describes a training programme for older people on how to make their voices heard.

Older people's forums across South Africa, in both urban and rural communities, are committed to representing and advocating for the advancement of the rights of older people. However, many of the forums lack awareness of either formal or informal channels through which to articulate the needs of older people, and fail to pursue a clear strategic path to achieving their objectives.

The South African Older Persons Forum (SAOPF) and HelpAge International are working in partnership with funding from the European Union to strengthen the voice of older men and women. The programme is designed to enable older men and women to engage with local government with the aim of ensuring just and equitable access to services and eradicating age- and gender-based discrimination.

HelpAge International has designed a one-day training programme for older men and women to package the data they collect through older citizens monitoring (see page 10) and create messages to campaign and advocate for change.

The programme assists older people to present their issues in a way that will bring about change.

The training ensures that, first and foremost, they know that freedom of expression is their constitutional right and it is not wrong to stand up and ask for change when their issues are not attended to. The training provides a platform for older people to open up and talk about issues affecting them in their communities. These issues are collected and put together in a report for their organisations, with the support of the local municipality, to find solutions.

The training teaches older people to structure their messaging to communicate well with both media and policy makers. Older people are encouraged to raise their voice and ensure older people's issues are visible in both programming and at policy level. The training emphasises that older people must remain objective in their messaging, ensuring that every ask is backed up by evidence.

About 8-10 older people take part in each session. They are selected from

SAOPF based on their involvement and experience of issues of older people. Most of them are the chairs of the forums, or the coordinators. The training has the following modules:

1. Freedom of expression is a right and responsibility

This reminds participants that they no longer should live in fear, and that every South African citizen, old and young, has a constitutional right to freedom of expression.

It encourages them to realise that they have a responsibility and an opportunity to help develop their communities, as well as advocate for change and improvements on issues affecting older people.

2. What "Voice" is and why it is important

This gives a background to older people as to why their voice is important, highlighting the fact that older people have been discriminated against (by family, community, institutional and policy level), which results in older people's issues being invisible or poorly represented.

"We should stand up for our rights"

Elizabeth Mkame, Age Demands Action (ADA) campaign spokesperson and board member, Muthande Society for the Aged

My concern for justice and equality has strong roots in my life. For 23 years I worked in a church organisation called Diakonia, which had a strong focus on social issues.

The experience I gained – travelling around the country to open new offices, fundraising, making people aware of their rights – sparked a real passion for social justice in me. It seemed a natural step forward to get involved with Muthande, an organisation which campaigns for older people's rights.

I became an ADA campaign spokesperson largely because of my involvement with

Muthande, which kindled in me a strong desire to improve older people's lives. Through ADA I have improved my skills in a whole range of areas, including office management, leadership and people management, training and presentation, and advocacy and communication.

It's a wonderful experience to advocate for older people, speak directly to decision-makers and raise awareness of older people's issues. The year 2014 brought a real highlight: I had an opportunity to address young and old through an intergenerational event organised by the Department of Justice. The event focused on the abuse that older

people often experience – a widespread issue that society needs to wake up to.

Thanks to ADA, older people in South Africa now enjoy much more respect and have developed more confidence in themselves. Their ideas are now taken seriously and the Government recognises the need to take their experiences on board. For example, the Department of Justice is now working to make sure the country's courts offer older people a more supportive environment.

My hopes for the future? I passionately believe older people's experience, skills and wisdom should be used to the full to help create a better world. As older people, we should be listened to – we have so much to say. Most importantly, we should stand up for our rights, and never let anyone look down upon us.

Why “Voice”?

Older people have been discriminated against (by family, community, institutional and policy level).

This results in invisibility and denial of human rights as people age.

It leads to poor inclusion of older age by governments and agencies working to reduce poverty and inequality.



3. Approach

This explains that HelpAge International together with its partners has developed a programme that will equip older people to engage with the media, monitor news and engage with decision makers.

The session refers to older citizens monitoring (OCM) and Age Demands Action (ADA) as the two critical elements. OCM is a way to collect data and use that as evidence in their communications and messaging. The data becomes the source for their communications.

ADA is a platform to amplify their voices.

4. What makes news

This takes older people through the priority points on what makes news (timing, proximity, significance, prominence, issues with human interest) and how to structure their messages to draw media attention.

5. “Inverted pyramid”

This illustrates how information should be prioritised and structured in a news report with the most important first.

6. Exercise to identify priority issues

Older people are asked pick issues that are a priority in their communities and structure them in an inverted pyramid format.

7. Tips on engaging with the media

This advises: Be vigilant when dealing with the media. Prepare a factsheet, which will guide you and can be given to the journalist or policy maker as a point of reference. Make sure every piece of information you provide is backed up by evidence. Always tell the truth. If you are not sure, say that you will get back to the journalist.

What makes news

Timing Something new, which should be told the day it happens

Proximity Stories that happen in the community

Significance The number of people affected – more makes a newsworthy story

Prominence Famous people get more coverage

Human interest A person turning 100, stories with a human face



8. Lobbying for support

This explores finding strategic partnerships with organisations that can assist older people to achieve their goal (such as youth organisations, church leaders, municipal managers and so on).

9. News sources

Older people identify news sources that they use, such as community, face-to-face, family, government announcements, newspapers, radio and television, and by word of mouth.

10. Monitoring and analysing news

This takes older people through the process of monitoring news (whether good or bad), analysing it and preparing a response such as a policy ask, an issue to campaign about through ADA, or a response to the media.

11. Selecting a spokesperson

After the planning, older people need to select a person to present the issues of the group. This person will be a point of contact for information, with support from the group.

Choosing a spokesperson



A spokesperson is someone who speaks on behalf of a group.

The spokesperson must be able to speak well and negotiate on issues.

They must represent the group's views, not their own views.

They are the point of contact for information.

12. Platforms to use to send the message across

This looks at communication methods such as a peaceful march, community meeting, radio stations, local government meeting (ward meetings), newspapers or meetings with chiefs.

13. Monitoring and evaluation

Older people are given tips on how to measure the impact of their communication, based on the response they receive.

Lwazikazi Mtana is Communications Officer, HelpAge International Southern Africa Regional Office. Email: lwazikazi.mtana@helpagesouthafrica.org



A guide to good governance

This article suggests how to make sure a network has a clear direction and is accountable to its members.

Governance is the way in which an organisation or network distributes powers, rights and accountability. Good governance is vital for ensuring that an age network – a network of organisations promoting the rights of older people – has a strategic direction and that it serves the needs of older people. It also safeguards the network from being used by individuals or organisations for their own gain.

Typically, age networks are managed by a national coordinator. He or she may be supported by a small team including communications, coordination, project and finance staff. The national coordinator may be a volunteer (as with the Malawi Network of Elderly Persons Organisations) or a paid staff member (as with the age network in Zambia).

A common form of governance is to give ultimate responsibility for the actions of the network to a group of people, known as the board of trustees. In this case, the national coordinator reports to the board.

Board members guide the network's strategic direction and review its progress. They are not responsible for the daily work of the network.

The constitution of the age network normally specifies the number of board members, the criteria for selecting them, and how they will be elected, appointed or re-elected. A board usually has about 6-12 members, made up of representatives of member organisations. Board members commonly serve for two years before standing for re-election and serve for a limited number of terms (usually no more than three). They should work in a voluntary, unpaid capacity but may have their expenses paid.

Board members can bring a range of skills, knowledge and contacts to make up a strong governing body. They should include representatives of the people the network aims to serve, namely older men and women, and a balance of men and women.



Eva-Lotta Jansson/HelpAge International

Good governance is necessary to guide an age network's strategic direction and make sure it serves the needs of older people.

Their responsibilities include guiding the vision and direction of the age network, defining and safeguarding values, ensuring accountability and transparency, monitoring management systems and progress, and promoting the network.

Some board members will have additional responsibilities. For example, the chair leads the board by ensuring that board members fulfil their responsibilities and supporting the age network to achieve its strategic objectives. The treasurer oversees the financial affairs of the age network, while the secretary is responsible for the smooth functioning of the board.

Age network members can support the board to function well by:

- agreeing with the board members what the different parties' roles and responsibilities are
- meeting new board members and providing an induction
- developing a clear process for handling grievances by network members
- not trying to make decisions for which the board is responsible
- effectively managing the day-to-day activities of the network
- keeping up a dialogue with the board as required.

What makes a good board member?

To serve a network well, board members need:

- **commitment to the mission and strategic objectives of the age network**
- **an understanding of the needs and rights of older men and women**
- **an understanding of the constitution, structure and work of the age network**
- **a willingness to commit time, especially to prepare for and attend board meetings**
- **a willingness to use their influence and contacts to lobby on behalf of the age network**
- **good judgement in making important decisions about the future direction of the age network**
- **specific skills and knowledge that can advance and develop the age network such as finance, resource mobilisation or advocacy**
- **an ability to think strategically and guide the age network accordingly**
- **discretion in working with others on confidential issues**
- **an ability to work in a diverse team.**

HelpAge network members

More than a hundred organisations in over seventy countries are members of the HelpAge global network standing up for the rights of older people.

We extend a warm welcome to nine new members: Reach One Touch One Ministries (ROTOM), Health Nest Uganda, Promo-Femmes/Développement Solidarité (PF/DS), Almanar Voluntary Organization, Community Development Volunteers for Technical Assistance (CDVTA), HelpAge Cambodia, Shaanxi Yihe Development Centre for Ageing (YDCA), Valli, and CORDES, El Salvador.

East, West and Central Africa

Almanar Voluntary Organization, Sudan
 Community Development Volunteers for Technical Assistance (CDVTA), Cameroon
 Current Evangelism Ministries, Sierra Leone
 Ethiopia Elderly and Pensioners National Association (EEPNA)
 Fantsuam Foundation, Nigeria
 Health Nest Uganda
 HelpAge Ghana
 HelpAge Kenya
 Kenya Society for People with Aids (KESPA)
 Mauritius Family Planning Association
 Promo-Femmes Développement Solidarité, Burkina Faso
 Reach One Touch One Ministries (ROTOM), Uganda
 Regional Centre for the Welfare of Ageing Persons Cameroon (RECEWAPEC)
 Rift Valley Children and Women Development Organisation, Ethiopia
 Sawaka-Karagwe (SAWAKA), Tanzania
 Senior Citizens' Council of Mauritius
 Sierra Leone Society for the Welfare of the Aged
 South Sudan Older People's Organization (SSOPO)
 Sudanese Society for the Care of Older People (SSCOP)
 Tanzania Mission to the Poor and Disabled (PADI)
 The District Pastoralist Association, Kenya
 Uganda Reach the Aged Association (URAA)

Southern Africa

Age-in-Action, South Africa
 Association of Retired Persons Mozambique (APOSEMO)
 Elim Hlanganani Society for the Care of the Aged, South Africa
 HelpAge Zimbabwe (HAZ)
 Maseru Senior Women's Association, Lesotho
 Muthande Society for the Aged (MUSA), South Africa
 Senior Citizens' Association of Zambia (SCAZ)
 VUKOXA, Mozambique

East Asia and Pacific

CASCD, Vietnam
 China National Committee on Ageing (CNCA)
 Coalition of Services of the Elderly (COSE), Philippines
 Council on the Ageing (COTA), Australia
 Fiji Council of Social Services/FCOSS HelpAge Centre
 Foundation for Older People's Development (FOPDEV), Thailand
 HelpAge Cambodia
 HelpAge Korea
 Helping Hand Hong Kong, China
 Instituto de Acção Social, China
 Mongolian Association of Elderly People
 National Council for the Senior Citizens Organisations of Malaysia
 Office of Seniors Interests, Australia
 Senior Citizens' Association of Thailand
 Senior Citizens' Council of Thailand
 Shaanxi Yihe Development Centre for Ageing (YDCA)
 Singapore Action Group of Elders (SAGE)
 Society of Women's Initiative for Ageing Successfully (WINGS)
 Tsao Foundation, Singapore
 Vietnam Association of the Elderly (VAE)
 Yayasan Amal Usiamas, Malaysia
 Yayasan Emong Lansia (YEL), Indonesia

South Asia

Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition (BWHC)
 Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Bangladesh
 Gramin Vikas Vigyan Samiti (GRAVIS), India
 HelpAge India
 HelpAge Sri Lanka
 Pakistan Medico International
 Resource Integration Centre (RIC), Bangladesh

Eurasia and Middle East

Albanian Association of Geriatrics & Gerontology (AAGG)
 Ardager, Kazaksthan
 Center for Studies on Aging (CSA), Lebanon
 Dobro Delo, Russia

El Wedad Society for Community Rehabilitation, Gaza
 Mission Armenia
 OSMIJEH, Bosnia Herzegovina
 Palestinian Center for Communication & Development Strategies (PCCDS)
 Resource Centre for Elderly People (RCE), Kyrgyzstan
 Serbian Red Cross
 Turbota pro Litnix v Ukraini, Ukraine

Western Europe

Ældre Sagen, Denmark
 Age Action Ireland
 Age International, UK
 Caritas Malta
 Centre for Policy on Ageing, UK
 Cordaid, Netherlands
 HelpAge Deutschland
 HelpAge International España, Spain
 Kwa Wazee, Switzerland
 Pensionärernas Riksorganisation (PRO), Sweden
 Slovenska Filantropija/Slovene Philanthropy, Slovenia
 Valli – the Union for Senior Services, Finland
 WorldGranny, Netherlands
 Zivot 90, Czech Republic

Latin America and the Caribbean

Action Ageing Jamaica
 ALA Dominicana
 Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA)
 Asociación Gerontológica Costarricense (AGECO), Costa Rica
 Asociación Red Tiempos de Colombia
 Caritas Chile
 Centro de Asistencia y Promoción Integral de Salud (CAPIS), Peru
 Centro Proceso Social, Peru
 CESTRA, Colombia
 CooperAcción, Peru
 CORDES, El Salvador
 Dominica Council on Ageing
 Extended Care through Hope and Optimism (ECHO), Grenada
 Fundación Horizontes, Bolivia
 Fundación ISALUD, Argentina
 Haitian Society for the Blind (SHAA)

HelpAge Barbados
 HelpAge Belize
 HelpAge St Lucia
 Instituto para el Desarrollo de la Pesca y Minería (IPEMIN), Peru
 National Foundation for Blind Care Suriname
 Old People's Welfare Association (OPWA), Montserrat
 Peru Coordinating Group for Older People (Mesa de Trabajo)
 Pro Vida Bolivia
 Pro Vida Colombia
 Pro Vida Perú
 Reaching Elderly Abandoned Citizens Housebound (REACH), Dominica
 Red de Programas para el Adulto Mayor, Chile
 Society of St Vincent de Paul, Antigua
 St Catherine Community Development Agency (SACDA), Jamaica
 Sumaj Punchay, Bolivia

North America

AARP, USA
 HelpAge Canada
 HelpAge USA
 West Virginia University Center on Aging, USA

HelpAge regional centres

To enquire about membership, contact your nearest HelpAge regional centre or the London office (address on page 16).

East, West and Central Africa

helpage@helpage.co.ke

Southern Africa

info@helpagesouthafrica.org

East Asia and Pacific

hai@helpageasia.org

South Asia

info.np@helpagesa.org

Eurasia and Middle East

marco.aviotti@helpage.org

Latin America and the Caribbean

info@helpagela.org

Dynamic global network

Jane Scobie describes HelpAge International's aim to support a dynamic global network standing up for the rights of older people.

HelpAge International is the secretariat of a collaborative, diverse and dynamic global network that aims to bring positive change to the lives of people in older age.

The network is at the heart of everything we do. In April 2016, we adopted a new Theory of Change which describes in simple terms what we do, why we do it, and how our support to the network contributes towards our vision of a world in which all older people can lead dignified, healthy and secure lives. In summary, we aim to:

Learn We learn directly from network members and apply this learning to our own work, as well as providing a dynamic platform to exchange ideas, evidence and best practice between network members.

Collaborate We collaborate with network members across all four areas of our work – programme delivery, advocacy, strengthening older people's voices, and generating and using evidence – and we support members to collaborate independently by connecting them with each other.

Strengthen We strengthen network members' capacity, both through structured activities and by facilitating exchanges between members that contribute to their development, strengthening the network as a whole.



The HelpAge global network connects organisations working with or for older people across the world.

The civil society sector is evolving internationally to play an increasingly catalytic role. Working with a diverse range of organisations globally will make HelpAge more effective, resilient and sustainable. In particular, over the coming months, we aim to step up our work on knowledge management and strengthen collaboration across the global network. Strengthening regional and sub-regional networks such as described in this issue of *Ageways* is key to this approach.

“By designing and planning together, we can achieve more and be more effective.”

Arun Maira, Chair, HelpAge International

To find out more about the HelpAge global network, please contact your regional centre (details on page 15) or Jane Scobie, Head of Network Development, HelpAge International. Email: jscobie@helpage.org

HelpAge International helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives.

Copies of *Ageways* are available free of charge to people working with older people. Please email info@helpage.org giving your name, job title, organisation name and complete postal address and explain how you will use *Ageways*.

You can download *Ageways* as a PDF from www.helpage.org/ageways

Ageways exchanges practical information on ageing and development, particularly good practice developed in the HelpAge network.

Editor: Celia Till
Email: ctill@helpage.org

HelpAge International, PO Box 70156,
London WC1A 9GB, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 7278 7778 (switchboard)
www.helpage.org

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MUTHANDE SOCIETY
FOR THE AGED

